



Platformers

Obvious Choices:

Sonic the Hedgehog Series, Castle of Illusion, *Disney's Aladdin*, *Disney's The Lion King*, Wonderboy Series.

Ristar



Unlike many of the glut of *Platformers* from the 16-bit era, Ristar boasted a main character actually had some interesting capabilities. *Ristar's* gimmick is simple, but effective; *Ristar* can't jump very high, or do any feats of extreme acrobatics. Instead, he can stretch his arms about two *Ristar*-Lengths ahead of him, he can grab onto ledges, walls, handholds, ladders, and enemies — essentially, grabbing onto whatever you can — to destroy things, to advance to new places, to get cool secrets.

The play control in *Ristar* is a bit slow-paced in design, but that's more due to the game's unique level designs and forcing the player to come to grips with the game's unique style of game play. The control itself is quite responsive and even making use of the grab move will soon become second nature to anyone that spends a significant amount of time with the game.

The game even features quite a few puzzle elements to add even more challenge to the levels and the boss fights you'll endure at the end of each planet are extremely well designed and implemented. It's clear from the moment you begin playing the game that **Sonic Team** wanted to take a radically different approach to the design with this game and it really paid off in the finished product.

Dynamite Headdy



This **Treasure's** *2D Action/Platformers* was not quite as spectacular as the popular **Gunstar Heroes**, but **Dynamite Headdy** has everything you look for in a **Treasure** game; Crazy special effects, tons of sprites with little to no slowdown, an interesting weapons system, psychotic bosses, and trademark **Treasure** strangeness. Most of the levels consist of fighting bosses with only small sections of normal battling in between. As a result, the game is incredibly varied, featuring an incredible array of ideas and fast-paced action, while retaining the *2D Platformers* game mechanic.

Headdy takes **Gunstar Heroes's** principal idea – visually stunning and highly original boss encounters, lots of them, in quick succession – and places it within the structure and control scheme of a *Platformers* game instead of a *Run 'n Gun Shooter*. It then expands on **Gunstar Heroes** by making the lead-in levels to these bosses innovative and entertaining experiences in their own right... **Dynamite Headdy** is full of ideas, frequently used once and then discarded. Each sub-level is so distinct from the next that they may as well be entirely different games, sharing only a control scheme. What you see here is a game developer at the height of its powers, so confident in its abilities that it's prepared to waste what might, for other developers, be a decade's worth of concepts in a single game. A game that, with a fair amount of practice, can be completed in about an hour.

Rocket Knight Adventures



In the avalanche of *2D Platformers* during the 16-bit era, it was easy for a game like *Konami's Rocket Knight Adventures* to get lost in the shuffle. *Rocket Knight Adventures* has more technique and plot than any other platform of the era. The slick effects and big bosses alone can carry the game. It may have its flaws — mainly with the replay value, but overall, *Rocket Knight Adventures* is a solid value for the *Genesis*.

The best games are usually the ones you can jump right into, with simple and effective control, and *Rocket Knight Adventures* provides easy access. Attacking and jumping are the only things you need to do and holding down the attack button will charge your jetpack, giving you a limited boost to reach ledges and goodies such as 1ups, life fruit, and bonus gems. A neat twist to this is that boosting at an angle into a wall will bounce you up to higher levels not accessible otherwise. Many of these points are identified with arrows on the wall, so don't worry about getting lost.

Marvel Land



Like all good *2D Platformers*, *Marvel Land* starts out easy and quickly gets hard. Each of the four worlds has six or seven areas plus a boss level. Only the most skilled gamer can beat all thirty levels without using the warps. Only then can one defeat the final boss; *The Mole King*. The level design, the character design, and the powerups all stand out. The whole game takes place in a colorful

amusement park. Some levels are on roller coasters, on *Ferris* wheels, or on swinging pirate ship rides. The enemies are colorful and original; they are the carnivorous hamburger, the home-run-hitting grasshopper, and the pirate with the boomerang hat. The character designers didn't slouch on *Prince Talmi*'s design either.

Called *Talmi's Adventure* in Europe, *Marvel Land* is an old, forgotten platforming gem by *Namco*. *Marvel Land* was released as a *Coin-op Arcade* in 1989, and it bears a resemblance to other *Run 'n Jump* games of the day, such as *Blue's Journey* and *Alex Kidd*, featuring bright, colorful artwork and upbeat sound... Do you like to die? If so, you're in for a treat because this game is really hard. Harder than *Sonic the Hedgehog*, but not as hard as *Shadowgate*. Anyone with patience or the level select code should be able to beat it eventually. The jumping, as you might expect, is very precise and unforgiving.

Garfield: Caught in the Act



If you're looking for a *2D Platformers* game that is a bit more friendly and enjoyable instead of especially challenging, *Garfield: Caught in the Act* is a wonderful gem to play. In this 16-bit adventure, *Garfield* gets sucked into his television and he has to find his way back out. *Garfield's* weapons change depending on what level you are playing. The levels are also based off of old movies but are changed to *Garfield* style, i.e. *Casablanca* is now called *Catsablanca* and *Count Dracula* is now *Count Slobula*. A lot of the bosses are *Odie* the dog from the *Garfield* comic strip but in different characters.

Garfield himself seamlessly crosses over in this video game debut; he is well-sized, smoothly animated and has a vast set of moves at his disposition, from his various attacks to his unique gestures as he pushes blocks/rocks, looks around or simply stands still. The cartoon's deadpan humor has been kept intact and shines throughout; *Garfield* adapts to the various settings with amusing touches – he wears a cape in the vampire-themed level; he has fangs in the prehistoric stage; he wears a hat in level four, etc.

Action / Adventure

Obvious Choices:

Revenge of Shinobi, Ecco Series, Castlevania Bloodlines, Splatterhouse Series.

Mega Man: The Wily Wars



Of course, most **Mega Man** games wouldn't be considered a hidden gem but this one is a special case. The **Mega Man: The Wily Wars** was a colorful but true **Mario All-Stars** style port of **Megaman**, **Megaman 2**, and **Megaman 3**. Exclusive to the game were several extra levels called *Wily's Tower*. This was unlocked with completion of the main game.

Each level contained an exclusive boss and you were able to mix and match items and weapons from the first three games to tackle the challenge. It was only released on cartridge in Europe with a **Sega Channel** release in the states. This **2D Action** game was the only **Mega Man** game created by **Capcom** on the **Genesis / Mega Drive** hardware.

Graphically, the **Mega Man** games are updated modestly from the **NES** games. *Mega Man* himself is still a little blue bundle of action, but now he has a couple of shades on him. Just about every enemy in this collection has improvements like that. But the big improvements are done to the stage backdrops... It's just the right amount of visual upgrade to already-acknowledged **NES** classics.

The music also gets a nice update, thanks to the **Genesis** more superior sound engine. The **Mega Man 2** intro theme never sounded cooler... But perhaps the neatest addition to **Mega Man: The Wily Wars** is the *Wily's Tower* stage, exclusive only to this game. By completing all three **Mega Man** games, a new game will open up, where you will have the chance to fight three all-new exclusive robots, never seen in any **Mega Man** before or ever since. And beating the Wily Tower will treat you to yet another ending. So there is much more to strive for here.

Flashback: The Quest for Identity



Touted as a *CD-ROM Game on a Cartridge*, [Flashback: The Quest for Identity](#) was one of the most graphically impressive [Genesis](#) games in its day. The game features fully hand-drawn backdrops and for its time remarkably fluid rotoscoped animation of walking, running and jumping movements, reminiscent of the earlier [Prince of Persia](#).

In addition to its beautiful graphics, [Flashback: The Quest for Identity](#) has some of the most engrossing gameplay and puzzles that you will find on the [Genesis](#).

On the surface, [Flashback: The Quest for Identity](#) doesn't seem much more than a [Prince of Persia](#) clone. Sure, you climb platforms, perform running jumps, hit switches, solve little puzzles to proceed – the usual stuff. *Conrad* actually controls quite a bit better than the old [Prince of Persia](#) ever did – pressing left or right makes *Conrad* walk in that direction (as opposed to running).

If you need to jump on a higher ledge, you can just run towards it and *Conrad* will automatically leap up to it. Little tweaks in the old formula make [Flashback: The Quest for Identity](#) much smoother than the game that inspired it... The [Amiga](#), [Genesis](#), and [PC](#) disk versions were the first to hit the market.

While the [Genesis](#) version had slightly inferior graphics due to the limited color palette, it still managed to look quite good – the only real noticeable difference are in the details of the sprites.

X-Men 2: Clone Wars



Because of its late release, [X-Men 2: Clone Wars](#) didn't nearly get the attention it deserved. There are a variety of [X-men](#) characters with different weapons and abilities to choose from. [X-Men 2: Clone Wars](#) competes quite well with the best [2D Action](#) games on the [Genesis](#) in single-player mode, but it's also a blast in co-op. In addition, [X-Men 2: Clone Wars](#) has an excellent 16-bit soundtrack that just completes the experience. Although released four years after the first [X-Men](#) on [Genesis](#), this cartridge managed to atone for many of its predecessor's sins. First, the graphics are much improved. The characters are larger, sharper, and more detailed. The music is menacing, and the sound effects are high quality. The stages are more interesting, including a snow stage in Siberia. Although there's still plenty of jumping, the platforms are larger and much more forgiving. Your special moves are no longer limited, allowing you to be more aggressive... [X-Men 2: Clone Wars](#) is a much better game, but it's still very difficult, and there aren't any checkpoints.

Red Zone



If you want a [2D Action](#) title that shows off some of the graphical capabilities of the [Genesis](#) chopper game vibe, [Red Zone](#) is your ticket. [Red Zone](#) features an overhead view like that in the [Coin-op Arcade](#) version of [Thunderblade](#) in overhead mode. Instead of typical [Shoot 'em Up](#) gameplay, you spend more time exploring to find the next target.

That may sound a little odd, since **Zyrinx** only released three games for the system, but you have to respect the unabashed pride these people had in their products. Just look at one of **Red Zone's** introductory screens! The graphical triumphs that abound in this game are lauded in big lettering; rotating textured backgrounds, full motion video compression, polygons, real-time zooming, and vector graphics. All running without additional hardware.

Red Zone is played with a top-down perspective in both the compound infiltration and helicopter flight stages. Note that this is not the same as the isometric camera angle in the popular **Strike** series of helicopter games.

In **Red Zone** you are viewing the game from directly above your ship, much like in vertical **Shoot 'em Up** games such as **M.U.S.H.A.**, and **Raiden Trad**. This viewpoint allows for some awesome visuals rarely seen anywhere else on the console. The landscape is a single rotating polygon, which means that the entire world will turn in a fluid motion as you twist and turn your way through power lines and buildings.

The Adventures of Batman & Robin



The **Batman** franchise has had quite a few video game interpretation, but unfortunately, not a lot of them have been timeless creations. While it doesn't reach perfection, the **Genesis** version of **The Adventures of Batman & Robin** is a beautiful example of 16-bit graphics and solid **2D Action** gameplay.

The Adventures of Batman & Robin is also a nice game to look at. The graphics are clear and well drawn and the use of color is consistent with the cartoon, so fans will not be disappointed. Even **Batman's** famous jaw is present and accounted for! Sprites may seem small but that's a good thing considering the amount of action going on at any given time. Explosions are typically **Genesis** and not too impressive (there's some flicker) but the lack of slowdown overall shows that even at the late date this title was released, the system was still capable of pushing itself.

Speaking of pushing, wait until you see what this game makes your *Genesis* do. With the exception of *Gunstar Heroes*, no game its library has the sheer amount of incredible effects found in *The Adventures of Batman & Robin*. Sprite and background rotation, scaling, multiple parallax; just about all the eye candy you can think of has been squeezed out the hardware.

Once you've gotten past the difficulty and questionable musical choices, there's really a great game beneath that's worth checking out. With a *Game Genie* and a friend, it can be quite enjoyable. Just don't expect an easy ride. *Batman* has tried repeatedly to be a successful game character and *Clockwork Tortoise* has come as close as anyone to making that happen.

Bonanza Brothers



Bonanza Brothers is some sort of mix between a *Stealth* game and a *Shooter* game. The graphics are great and the music is catchy. You play as a thief who has to collect a set of items in each stage and find the exit while avoiding different kinds of guards; while the single player mode is nothing to write home about, the game really shines in multiplayer. Each player controls one of the characters and must cooperate to get the items as fast as possible, the cool thing is that it is played split screen, so you can go together to cover each other back, or you can split to get the items faster.

Bonanza Brothers harkens back to the early 80's *Coin-op Arcade* titles with their simple, yet addictive play control ideas. While there are obvious *Keystone Kapers* and *Elevator Action* influences throughout the game, the overall gameplay design is at least original enough to stand on its own two feet... You can run around in all directions and you even have the ability to jump and shoot off your gun. But you'll have to move fast as your gun will only temporarily stun the guards and then they'll be back on your tail again. You'll also have to deal with crazy waiters, soda cans you'll trip on, and various other dangers around each and every corner of the game. Luckily you'll also have the ability to use certain items and doors in each level to knock out the guards and other people that stand in your way. While these obstacles start off quite easy to deal with, as you progress through the game, they'll become much more diligent and bothersome.

Run 'n Gun Shooters

Obvious Choices:

[Gunstar Heroes](#), [Contra: Hard Corps](#), [Vectorman Series](#), [Earthworm Jim Series](#), [El Viento](#), [Doom Trooper](#).

[Ranger X](#)



If you're looking for an affordable scrolling shooter that is something out of the ordinary and that will show off some of the [Genesis](#)'s technical capabilities, [Ranger X](#) is a safe bet. It feels like a bit of a mix between a *Run 'n Gun Shooter* and a traditional horizontal *Shoot 'em Up*. It has a pretty interesting control setup and will make full use of a six-button controller if you have one available.

The game play is pretty intense, as enemies are constantly shooting at you, even on the Easy difficulty setting. It takes awhile to get used to the controls, and it doesn't help that [Ranger X](#) is such a huge target. You're given limited continues, which respawn you right at the point where you died, although you can gain more credits by earning points.

Although [Ranger X](#) is notable for intense gameplay, it also ranks up next to [Gunstar Heroes](#) as featuring some of the most impressive graphics on the [Genesis](#). Working with the limited 64 color palette of the system, [Ranger X](#) produces some extremely colorful visuals.

Certain areas have some cool parallax scrolling effects, which gives them a nice 3D look. There are also plenty of unique bosses, most of whom take up very large portions of the screen.

Target Earth (Assault Suit Leynos)



The American title and cover art probably didn't help the widespread adoption of this [2D Action/Platformers](#). Some of you might be more familiar with the Japanese name [Assault Suit Leynos](#) and the [Assault Suit](#) series as a whole (which also included [Cybernator](#) on the [SNES](#)).

[Target Earth](#) is the first game in the series, and much like its predecessors, it is an intensely-challenging side scroller that allows you free movement and a variety of weapons. It isn't for the faint of heart, but if you love shooting [Platformers](#) with a challenge, you need to track down this bargain.

In [Target Earth](#), you control a mecha which can arm itself with up to six pieces of equipment. You start off with a standard machine gun (the only weapon to have unlimited ammo), but you also get a spread gun and a strange weapon that seems to fire chaff.

Most of the missions have goals beyond simply reaching the end. In the first stage, once you reach a certain point, you need to destroy a huge battleship before it reaches your home base. In the third stage, you need to protect your battleship while bouncing around in *zero-g*, and make it back in time before it takes off without you.

At the end of each level, you're graded on your performance, which in turn will grant you new weapons. All and all, it's a pretty sizable arsenal, with over twenty different weapons. You can also equip armor, to increase your defense, or the *B-Pack*, a jetpack which lets you hover in mid-air for a few seconds.

In some levels, you're accompanied by some *NPC* helpers, giving the impression that at least you're not the only soldier on the battlefield like so many other video games, but they also tend to get killed pretty quickly... It's such a remarkably difficult game that it's hard to really enjoy it without turning on the invincibility code, which was added to the North American release. (Just hit [Start](#) on [controller 2](#) during play).

Alien Soldier



This *Run 'n Gun Shooter* is considered one of the hardest games ever developed by the cult-classic factory, *Treasure*, and was released only in Japan and Europe. It is very difficult to find in either region.

As usual, *Treasure* really put a lot of creativity into *Alien Soldier*'s graphics and animation. The characters are large, extremely detailed and fluidly animated. And as opposed to most other side-scrolling shooters, the levels are notably short and easy before reaching a boss. This results in the game being mostly large boss fights.

The stages are broken up into short sections where you take out all the little nasties to collect the power needed to beat the big bosses. Unlike most games which save the big boss until the end of the stage, *Alien Soldier* will throw a boss your way every few minutes, usually 3 or 4 per stage....The action is fast and furious, so if that sounds like your bag then this could be the game for you.

Given the similarities to *Treasure*'s own *Gunstar Heroes*, however, *Alien Soldier* sort of falls short, mainly because the platforming elements are not as good. It is also frustratingly difficult at times as well, which may put off some gamers. Still, this is an enjoyable *Run 'n Gun Shooter* game in its own right and well worth a look for fans of the genre.

Shoot 'em Up

Obvious Choices:

Thunder Force Series, M.U.S.H.A., Zero Wing, Twin Cobra, Fire Mustang, Raiden Trad, Super Airwolf/Cross Fire, Steel Empire, Fire Shark, Wings of Wor, Bio-Ship Paladin.

Elemental Master



Techno Soft arguably had their best years making **Genesis / Mega Drive** games. While not as well known as the **Thunder Force** series, **Elemental Master** stands as a worthy addition to their catalog of games.

The levels are designed to look like different landscapes, each offering various non-lethal obstacles and of course, tons of bad guys. *Laden* can fire any selected weapon up or down. Graphically **Elemental master** does not shine as brightly as **Techno Soft**'s other two **Shoot 'em Up** masterpieces, **Thunder Force III** or **Thunder Force IV**, but it does not trail but much.

Elemental Master's success lie in it not being like any other shooter, and players should understand that going in. It's a terrific, fairly original take on the vertical scrolling shooter and yet another feather in **Techno Soft**'s cap.

Though hardcore **Shoot 'em Up** fans looking for a tough challenge or great scoring opportunities may be disappointed, anyone willing to step into *Laden*'s shoes will have a great time killing his brother and anything else that dare step in his way.

Air Buster (Aero Blasters)



[Aero Buster](#) features plenty of the dodging and shooting you'd expect, [Kaneko](#) did however, add some variety to keep the player interested.

On stage two the play will be forced to move at full blast-processing speed through a variety of corridors that take twitch reflexes or memorization to navigate through. Stages three and four change the game physics to mimic zero gravity, and stage six has [Ikaruga](#)-like maze elements.

This game is worth checking out if you are going to explore the [Genesis' Shoot 'em Up](#) library. It's a competent game that offers a good challenge without getting frustrating. While everyone may not agree about [Aero Buster](#) being a great game, few [Shoot 'em Up](#) fans will call it a bad one.

Although weapons systems in [Shoot 'em Up](#) games are never perfect, the difficulty of [Aero Blasters](#) makes the complete stripping of upgrades upon death seem overly harsh. But despite this and despite its other problems, [Aero Blasters](#) is a challenging and attractive game that is strangely compelling to play and subsequently (with time and patience) beat.

Whether it be the excellent way in which the game is broken up into distinct areas or the amount of replay time the game offers with its three difficulty settings and adjustable life span, [Aero Blasters](#) stands as a good example of shooting games of the period and is an enjoyable distraction whatever style of game you normally enjoy.

Bio-Hazard Battle



[Bio-Hazard Battle](#) didn't really offer any ground-breaking gameplay or revolutionary appeal, but it's a solid shooter that is inspired by the likes of [Gradius](#) or [R-Type](#). There's a slight learning curve because of how the weapons work and many of the levels can be quite challenging.

It also offers the rarely seen two-player option and the levels show off some nice animations and scrolling effects. If you want a formulaic, but challenging alternative to the standard [Shoot 'em Up](#) franchises, [Bio-Hazard Battle](#) is one of the more affordable options.

The gameplay doesn't stray too far from the standard set by [Gradius](#) and [R-Type](#). There are eight horizontally scrolling stages and a choice of 4 different crafts with differing weapons. You can pick up weapon orbs which follow your craft about giving additional firepower.

The design of the ships is pretty original; they resemble mutated insects and other animals, and this at least sets the game apart from the flood of spaceship-based blasters from the same era... If you're looking to bring a pal along for the ride, it's worth noting the multiplayer aspects of this game. Two players can play simultaneously which isn't seen often in the [Shoot 'em Up](#) genre.

Gleylancer



[Gleylancer](#) is one of the more exciting Japanese exclusives on the [Mega Drive](#) (it has since shown up in other regions on the [Nintendo's Wii Virtual Consoles](#)). This is one of those rare [Shoot 'em Up](#)s that offers a wide range of options to the player before they even launch. For example, you can have your ships fire in the direction opposite to your movement. Of course, this may initially seem gimmicky, but as you invest more time into the game you realize that the different choices directly affect your strategy and exploring the myriad of possibilities available boosts the amount of playtime [Gleylancer](#) offers.

While the level design lacks polish, the ability to aim your weapons really opens up new doors for [Shoot 'em Up](#) gameplay – after playing [Gleylancer](#), every other game seems so strict, with just the ability to shoot forward. That's the trademark of an excellent game, and [Gleylancer](#) is one of the finest that the 16-bit era had to offer. Unfortunately, it's excellence combined with its relative rarity means it's something of an expensive gem, but [Mega Drive](#) shooters fans will find any price well worth it.

Truxton



This is what a balls out, high difficulty, manly shooter was like before bullet hell [Shoot 'em Up](#)s came around. In addition to great gameplay, [Truxton](#) had a great art direction (the skeletons just scream 80's *Heavy Metal*) and great music.

The **Genesis** port of **Truxton** faithfully replicates the joy of the **Coin-op Arcade** game, and despite attempts to squeeze the game layout into a screen that has been chopped vertically, smart design concessions in the port largely offset the unavoidable drawbacks, resulting in a great game... **Truxton** on **Genesis** is a great game with tons of replay value for **Shoot 'em Up** fans. The graphics – though not outstanding – are solid 16-bit fare, the sound and music are slightly above average, and the controls are perfect. **Truxton** is well worth collecting and playing, despite some frustration caused by unavoidable design compromises.

Granada



This is a game by **WolfTeam** put out in 1990, an unconventional shooter that involves you being in an upgradeable tank, freeroaming around the level destroying the bunkers one by one until all are clear and you have to face a giant level boss.

This game is amazingly fun, easy to control and not very well known probably because it wasn't very well advertised. Each level is uniquely challenging, and requires quick reactions and pits you against new enemies each level. All of this and a race against the clock makes for a severely under appreciated **Genesis** title.

There are many different varieties of enemies. The bosses are fairly unique, and they seem to be just challenging enough in the beginning and somewhat difficult in later levels. The level design for this game was great. You do not have to follow a set path through the level, you can take out the targets that you are required to destroy in any order that you wish.

There are also several, well hidden power-ups throughout the levels for you to find that make you shoot missiles for more damage. You use two main weapons in the game, a fast firing weapon, and a slower weapon that deals more damage. You will need to develop some strategy to determine which works best on different enemies or bosses.

Sub-Terrania



Not your ordinary *Shoot 'em Up*, *Sub-Terrania* was rather interesting for its time due to how important physics were to the gameplay. You had to learn how to handle your ship properly so as not to damage it and how to fight gravity on a regular basis by using fuel to boost your ship upwards. These things made the game challenging in a different kind of way than other shooters, where the main challenge comes from combat. Though, the game had that as well. It is one of the purest examples I've seen of a skill oriented game because unlike many other shooters, this game required you to actually get a firm grip on actually handling your ship properly before you could even think about engaging your enemies in combat. Playing the game for the first time felt like the first time you drove a car or rode a bike. Also, you had to rescue people in each stage which meant learning how to fight your enemies without causing casualties. It's these realistic gameplay elements, along with the genuinely skill oriented gameplay that made the game stand out.

Though this is a shooting game, you have a lot more to worry about than just the pesky aliens. Since you're not in open space, you also have to contend against the rigors of gravity that's constantly pulling you towards the ground. You have a limited shield, indicated by the ship-shaped life icons in the lower-left corner of your screen that fill up and turn red when you're hit. When they're completely full, your shield fails and your ship explodes. Moreover, hitting the floor or any other part of the subterranean landscape will drain your shield incredibly fast. It's not all bad though, as you're able to land properly and this becomes one of the most important features in the game, making it reminiscent of the *PC* classic *Lunar Lander*.

If you land too hard or too fast you'll do damage to your ship, so finesse is needed. Landing becomes necessary to pick up fuel and shield restore pods... the game looks, sounds, and smells like the average shooter but as it turns out it's more of a strategic puzzle that values piloting skills over twitch reflexes and manic shooting. The game's worth looking into if you're a hardcore gamer who's bored of the usual shooter and looking for something original, but it's definitely not for everyone.

Rail Shooters

Obvious Choices:

[Spare Harrier II](#), [Burning Force](#).

Panorama Cotton



Behind the cutesy exterior is a technically impressive and challenging *Rail Shooters* based heavily on [Sega's](#) 80s *Coin-op Arcade* classics at its core, but with several new additions to the formula such as multiple paths, destructible scenery, a level up system, special attacks and an end of level minigame involving falling teabags.

Furthermore there are huge bosses with creative patterns and multiple forms, and beautifully drawn cutscenes between each level. As to why [Panorama Cotton](#) didn't leave Japan, its hard to say. After pushing the *Mega Drive* to its limits in many areas and making a game that at its core would surely cater to [Sega](#) fans, the game had a ridiculously small print run even in Japan.

The true beauty of [Panorama Cotton](#)'s gameplay design comes through in the form of the construction of the stages. Other chase shooters seem to know only how to move forward into the screen, but [Panorama Cotton](#) takes the opportunity to scroll horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and at all sorts of other angles while maintaining the chase-view. On top of that, each stage is quite unique to the others, and several of them utilize multiple stage paths. Realizing all this, game's world takes on a depth much greater than any of its relatively bland peers.

The other great asset of [Panorama Cotton](#)'s gameplay is the placing and behavior of the enemies. No other chase-view offers so much variety in this department, yet there are no shortcomings to be found in this game whatsoever. All enemies and obstacles are completely fair; when they hit you, it's your fault. This game also lives up to the series' reputation of having exceptionally creative enemies, even to the point that they take on their own character. Few games can boast that.

Beat 'em Up / Hack 'n Slash

Obvious Choices:

[Streets of Rage/Bare Knuckle Series](#), [Golden Axe Series](#), [Ghouls 'N Ghosts](#), [Battletoads](#), [Double Dragon Series](#), [Comix Zone](#), [Battletoads & Double Dragon](#), [TMNT: The Hyperstone Heist](#), [Venom](#) and [Spider-Man: Maximum Carnage](#).

Cyborg Justice



Create a customizable cyborg (when you start a game, you choose a body, legs, and weapon, and there are about 7 of each) and go kill other cyborgs in classic *Beat 'em Up* style. Add in the ability to rip enemies apart and steal their weapon or legs (or absorb their body to regain some health) as well as an impressive number of different moves that can be pulled off, and you've got what I consider a true *Genesis* hidden gem. They crammed a lot of stuff into 3 buttons, and some moves are a lot more effective than others. *Cyborg Justice* also features a two player dueling mode, which is pretty fun, as well as a two player coop (which is pretty standard for *Beat 'em Ups*).

After selecting your arm, legs, and body beforehand, you enter the beginning of the game and simply walk in a straight line with the same background scrolling endlessly from behind. And every other 5-10 seconds, you'll be stopped by one or two cyborgs that you'll have to battle, just like *Double Dragon*. You can move all over the ground that's visible on screen, but you're essentially moving in a straight line.

Of course, this is where the game becomes unique and actually a little fun. You have your choice of six arms to choose from at the beginning of the game: a normal arm, a lance arm, a large cutting blade arm, a flamethrower arm, a gamma ray arm, and another one which is the stupidest choice I've ever seen. It literally shoots your arm out of its socket at the enemy, whereas you'll have to walk over, pick it up, and reattach it to yourself... The fighting moves are plentiful too and also offer lots of variety in fighting. There are many general moves, crouching block moves, punch moves, kick moves, few different jumps (depending on what legs you have), and different body attacks where you can latch onto other borgs and bash them with your arms, pick them up and throw them, or the most famous move which is to rip their arm off, and then rip their body off, a move combo which takes a cyborg down relatively quickly, as long as you don't suffer a cheap shot, which this game is full of.

It's also really entertaining to watch, and listen to it pop off of them. The best part of these moves is that you can attach an enemy's arm to yourself and use it, giving you the freedom to change your arm many times throughout the game. Once you rip their body off, you can steal its energy which replenishes some of your life meter back, and you can pick up and attach their legs to yourself too. See something on your enemy you like? Just rip that sucker off.

Mazin Saga: Mutant Fighter



This is an awesome *Beat 'em Up* based on a comic that is a solid compliment to the *Streets of Rage* series, but it utilizes *2D Fighting* segments for the massive bosses.

Mazin Saga's boss battles again reaffirm that undying adoration. Through most of the game, you fight as a little human-sized knight, fighting off other human-sized creatures. At the end of each stage, you transform into a giant version of yourself, *Power Rangers* style, to fight the final boss eye-to-eye. The game transforms into a very simple *2D Fighting* game, a change in gameplay which can be an extremely welcome respite from the regular sword-slashing rigamarole.

The intensity of these battles is driven skyward, largely by the insane difficulty, but even more so by the distinct disadvantage your character now has. The limber, spinning *Mazinger-Z* of the *Hack 'n Slash* has been traded for a slow, hulking version with a much more cumbersome fighting style. Your foes carry maces, shoot fireballs, and can charge at you repeatedly at impressive speeds, while you only have your sword swing to protect you. This really forces the player to strategize, finding just what tactics of *Mazinger-Z*'s limited arsenal will help him hold out until the beast has been slain. Sometimes this can make for a rather interesting battle, other times it can feel frustratingly unfair...

It is this incredible difficulty that will drive many players away from this fun little experience. *Mazin Saga* is only five levels long, with each level split into three stages. This length works, considering the fact that so few people will have the patience to go through later half's grueling duels over and over again. By the end, the challenge they provide makes up for it.

Fighting

Obvious Choices:

[Street Fighter II](#) Series, [Mortal Kombat](#) Series, [Samurai Shodown](#).

Eternal Champions



When [Street Fighter II](#) and [Mortal Kombat](#) were burning up the sales charts, [Sega](#) thought they needed to get in on the action with their own *2D Fighting* (before they took on *3D Fighting* with the *Virtua Fighter* series).

[Eternal Champions](#) was a solid contender and received quite a bit of marketing at the time of its release. Since then, it has lost quite a bit of mindshare and has been reduced to a cult favorite among [Sega](#) fans.

[Eternal Champions](#) may share many of the same features of [Capcom](#)'s and [Midway](#)'s fighters, but it does everything it can to distance itself from these titles and carve out a niche of its own. For one thing, the plot is actually quite good.

Each of the characters is a combat expert of his (or her) time period, and they've all been saved from the brink of death by the mysterious 'Eternal Champion' to participate in good old brawling tournament.

The reward is to return to their era and escape death, having proved themselves worthy to defend the interests of the human race against malevolent forces... All in all, [Eternal Champions](#) is still a worthwhile purchase if you like *2D Fighting* games. And, as a Western-developed title it feels subtly different from most other games in a genre dominated by Japanese developers.

WeaponLord



Why most people would be put off by [WeaponLord](#)'s AI, but the same goes for [Eternal Champions](#) which is already included. In any case, even really high quality Fighters tend to be lacking in the AI department, so it is fair to rate [WeaponLord](#) based purely on the multiplayer – which will surely please most [2D Fighting](#) fans. The thrust-blocking allows for very intense and drawn out fights. [WeaponLord](#) is originally for [SNES](#).

On first glance the game can be dismissed as [Samurai Shodown](#) in a fantasy setting, but that would overlook the depth of [WeaponLord](#)'s combat engine which includes the ability to break weapons, deflecting attacks, unblockable strikes, the aforementioned thrust aggressive blocking, and more. Combos can be extended by getting an opponent to stagger with a double-over hit or by knocking them over with a take-down move.

Finally, [WeaponLord](#) features multiple special moves which double as (and can be combo-ed into) [Mortal Kombat](#) style fatalities, allowing the victor to gut, behead, and otherwise defile the loser's corpse without breaking the flow of the game. If that's not enough humiliation, the game also lets players cut off clothing and hair during the match itself with a well timed strike. If that sounds ridiculously complex, it is, especially considering the competition at the time.

Further adding to [WeaponLord](#)'s complexity was its use of [Street Fighter II](#)-style special moves (D-pad motion then button press) along with [Primal Rage](#)-type inputs (hold button, motion D-pad, then release). Each of the seven combatants in [WeaponLord](#) sports about ten or so special moves, with roughly half of them belonging to each input method.

While [2D Fighting](#) games of this complexity are common today, they also benefit from having a training mode, which [WeaponLord](#) lacks.

RPG

Obvious Choices:

Phantasy Star Series.

Shadowrun



Based on a pen and paper *RPG*, the console versions of *Shadowrun* are an *RPG* that is set in a dark future. The gameplay is more similar to Western *PC RPGs* as opposed to traditional Japanese console *RPGs*. Because of this, it seemed to stay under the radar of mainstream console gamers.

Shadowrun offers the player an open style of gameplay, where one controls the main character, *Joshua*, in third person perspective during both exploration and combat. Battles are real time, and although of varying difficulty, tend to be brutally short. Initially, the player is restricted to a single area of the game, but shortly gains access to almost all other areas.

Access to other areas is accomplished primarily by taxi, although various restrictions and other modes of travel also exist, such as requiring a visa, or bypassing the visa check with use of a helicopter.

Instead of using experience points that you find in most *RPGs*, which allow you to move up levels, *Shadowrun* uses karma points, which you earn one at a time. These Karma points are used to make your character more powerful in the aspects of your choosing.

This game is far superior to the original *Shadowrun* for the *SNES* in almost every way. All *Genesis* owners who are looking for a worthy *RPG* experience should go find and play *Shadowrun*. Unless you hate futuristic *RPGs*, you'll get your money's worth.

Rings of Power



In this free-roaming *RPG*, you'll encounter a ton of characters and you must pay close attention to anyone and everything, as they might offer up a clue to where you need to go on your quest. The game has a bit of a difficulty curve at the beginning, but if you can get past the first town of the game, you will probably forgive these issues, and want to continue on.

The game supports multiple ways of transportation to navigate the vast map. There are no map markers, quest journals, or any other hand holding in this game. If you are a fan of adventure games, or western *RPGs* (or both), you will probably love this game. If you are more of a Japanese *RPG* person, you might want to pass on this one.

Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday



This game has a real *d20 table top game* feel, and many of your choices actually determine aspects of that game such as encountering combat. Throughout your journey, you will also earn more experience with the correct decision that leads to avoiding than you would if you encounter the battle and defeat all the enemies. The bones of this game is that of a turn based strategy. People who have played turned based futuristic strategy games (such as either early *X-Com*) will feel right at home in [Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday](#). Indeed, it often feels like a stripped down simpler version of games of that ilk. For players that are existing fans of this genre, it can only be a good thing, and for

those who perhaps are not familiar, this is simple enough to be an excellent starting title. The game is split into the ground based missions, and the transportation that occurs in space. Both contain their own turn-based combat system, so whilst on foot, you can make use of various weaponry and armour you can collect or purchase throughout the game, whereas in space combat, you are asked to man the futuristic gun turret, and rain down laser fueled doom on the opposing spacecraft.

Strategy

Obvious Choices:

[Shining Force](#) Series.

Herzog Zwei



Combining elements of *Real-Time-Strategy* and resource management into a *Shoot 'em Up*, [Herzog Zwei](#) is possibly one of the best games on [Sega's](#) 16-bit powerhouse. [Herzog Zwei](#) is a two-player game in which the object is to destroy the enemy's base. To accomplish this, the player was able to construct an assortment of units — including tanks, anti-aircraft guns, attack boats, infantry and armored cars.

[Herzog Zwei](#) was neglected by [Sega](#) at its release and was literally years ahead of its time. Nevertheless, it ultimately laid the foundation for games like [Dune II](#), [Warcraft](#), [BattleZone](#), and [Command & Conquer](#), by introducing most of the modern *Real-Time-Strategy* conventions.

The mechanics of [Herzog Zwei](#) make it a game with a slower feel than most modern *Real-Time-Strategy* games, making for more thoughtful play. You always find hybrid games like this to be interesting and such a neglected yet groundbreaking title should be shared with future gaming generations.

General Chaos



There's not too many games that qualify as a party *Strategy* game, but *General Chaos* can be placed at the top of the short list. The game is fun as a single-player game, but you'll really see it shine when you bring some friends on-board.

Here's how the game works; it's five-on-five warfare between two teams. You choose your set of five men before every battle and there are various types of soldiers like a flame thrower, a gunmen, and a bazooka launcher guy. You get limits on how many of each kind of man you can use.

A battle proceeds and if one of your men loses all his life, he'll lay out on the field for a certain amount of time, during that time, you can move your soldier by him and by pressing the **C** button, you call out for a medic to come and revive him and he'll be brought back into battle. There are also power ups on the field to pick up for newer weapons.

For play modes, there's a campaign mode where you and up to three of your buddies (with a multiplayer adaptor of course) can go against the computer in a set of battles with each proceeding one being harder. There is also a mode where up to four players can team up or go against each other in combat play. The last mode is boot camp, which is essentially a training mode, so you'll get learn the game mechanics and adapt to playing the game, learning everything about all the units, calling out medics, etc.

Believe it or not, *General Chaos* is really a simple and addictive *Strategy* game. The rudimentary war concept makes it so much fun to blast your opponents away. Throw in some human opponents and you've got yourself even more fun coming.

Aerobiz Supersonic



If you're a fan of *Strategy* games like *Sim City* or would like to test some of your business skills in game form, *Aerobiz Supersonic* is worth a look. Complete copies of the game can come at a bit of a premium, but there aren't too many other titles like it. Of course, it's not for everyone, but if the premise catches your interest, you really should dive in.

The replay value is through the roof. This is a *Strategy* game that really gives you a chance to test your business sense. Anyone interested in the business world should definitely give it a shot. Those who aren't interested in the business world, yet love strategy games, will love *Aerobiz Supersonic* as well. It's a thinking-man's game that tests every fiber of your being. Those looking for a game that will let them test their problem-solving abilities should look no farther.

Starflight



This free-roaming space voyage is a *Shooter/RPG* hybrid and is actually a port of a classic title, originally released for *DOS* and *Tandy* (and later other *PC* platforms). The *Genesis / Mega Drive* version was completely remade with graphics and gameplay. It isn't without its flaws, but strategy role-playing fans that enjoy *Star Trek*-like adventures and a different take on the genre should investigate this gem.

Fans of [Star Trek](#) will feel instantly at home, as you begin the game you're given your mission objectives and one is literally; "... to seek out new life and new civilizations, and boldly go where no man has gone before". If you haven't already inferred from the title, you're in command of a starship, only unlike a [Shoot 'em Up](#), you're literally in command. You're the captain in charge of hiring and training your crew, naming your proud vessel, purchasing upgrades for it and making all of the decisions in regard to your boldly-going.... [Starflight](#) truly is a landmark game lost to time like other genius mold-breakers such as [Herzog Zwei](#). If you're looking for a fast [2D Action/Shoot 'em Up](#) — although the combat is satisfying — you should look elsewhere because this is a game of exploration and not combat. If you're a fan of [Star Trek](#), or an [RPG](#) or strategy gamer looking for something a little different, then [Starflight](#) is right up your alley. You may spend upwards of sixty hours before you beat it, though even then the vast universe is still left open for you to explore and find whatever you may have missed on the over one hundred planets you can visit.

[Puzzle](#) / [Maze](#)

Obvious Choices:

[Ms. Pac-Man](#), [Mega Bomberman](#).

[Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine](#)



Even though the game wasn't promoted a whole lot (other than the [Sonic](#) tie-in), [Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine](#) is the best [Puzzle](#) games on the [Genesis](#). The game itself is actually based on the established [Puyo Puyo](#) series that had been keeping Japanese gamers occupied for years. The single-player mode offers interesting challenges as each opponent has a different technique and skill level. These different levels do an excellent job of testing your mastery of the game and have a great pace of difficulty. Beginners will not feel overwhelmed by the first level and will eventually progress until the final battle with [Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine](#) that will challenge even the most hardcore [Puzzle](#) addicts.

First off, the [Puyo Puyo](#) game play style is addictive in its own right. The simple goal of defeating your foe quickly becomes a journey due to the difficulty of the game. You'll find yourself on the losing end of the stick more times than you might like, but once you beat an opponent, you will get a nice feeling of satisfaction. The game play revolves around connecting four jellybeans of the same color together, and then doing that over and over again with other colors (or the same color, depending on the situation) and chaining them all together to form combinations that will cause junk to be dropped on your opponent's play area, making things all the more difficult for him. Conversely, this can be done to you, so be sure to beat your foe to the punch if you want to have a hope in hell of winning.

Racing

Obvious Choices:

[Virtua Racing](#), [Road Rash Series](#), [OutRun Series](#).

Championship ProAm



Did you ever get a kick out of [RC Pro-Am](#) on the [NES](#) or [Super RC Pro-Am](#) on the [Game Boy](#)? Well, [Championship Pro-Am](#) is essentially the series follow-up on the [Sega](#) 16-bit hardware.

[Championship Pro-Am](#) is an adaptation of the classic [NES](#) [Racing](#) games, but has its fair share of differences. For example, in this game, you face more drone racers and are timed for running laps. Furthermore, to get a new racer, you have to collect bonus letters to spell "Champion" (in [R.C. Pro-Am](#), you had to collect bonus letters to spell "[Nintendo](#)").

The gameplay is awesome, sporting some tight control and making great use of the stock Genny pad. Simplicity is the rule of the day- button **A** is used to accelerate and buttons **B** & **C** attack or sound the horn. No one expects complex control from an early 16-bit title about remote-controlled cars, so the basic design is quite fitting. This game does retain the classic formula as its source material. The tracks are also the same as in [R.C. Pro-Am](#).

Just as before, you can mod your racer to improve performance with any of the multitude of items available. You can collect super sticky tires, as well as turbo acceleration & high-performance engines. You can also collect missiles to shoot at your opponents ahead of you and bombs to prevent opponents from coming up past you from behind. Roll cages render you invincible from crashing, but you had to be careful, since your opponents can also make use of it.

Road Blasters



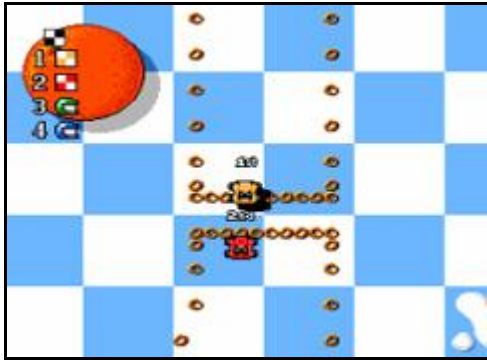
The *Genesis* version of this *Coin-op Arcade* classics is one of the best home versions you'll play. If you haven't played the *Arcade* version of *Road Busters*, the *Racing* dynamic is similar to *Outrun* series where you're trying to make checkpoints, but with fuel constraints instead of time limits. Thrown into the mix are weapons and enemies to take out. The combination makes for one of the underrated *Coin-op Arcade Racing* experiences ever.

The majority of your time in *Road Blasters* will be spent driving down the many levels in this game (50 in all) shooting the living daylights out of your rivals. You'll be facing off with enemy cars, bikers, and even some roadside gun turrets.

On top of those rivals, you will also have to stay sharp and make sure to avoid the many water puddles in the middle of the road that can, and will cause you to spin out of control, potentially sending you into enemy cars and blowing you up.

Along the way, you'll have to collect green orbs to keep your car from running out of fuel. You can get these puppies by destroying vehicles or by finding them scattered across the road. Be sure to have an itchy trigger finger when you go for the ones in the enemy vehicles, because while some cars only take one shot to kill, some take more, and you've got to be ready for anything in this *Racing* game.

Micro Machines



This *Racing* series based on the 90's toy series debuted on the *NES* and *Gameboy*, but eventually made it to the *Genesis* as well. Even though many mainstream gamers have forgotten about the series, it still has a lot of fans because of it's varied gameplay and whimsical courses.

The original *Micro Machines* made it to North America, but the sequels, *Micro Machines 2*, *Micro Machines Military*, and *Micro Machines '96* were limited to the *Mega Drive* in the UK and Japan.

Micro Machines is about eleven *Micro Drivers* who have devised a tournament to see which one is the fastest racer. Basically, it's an overhead *Racing* game with thirty-two different tracks (five of which are bonus), nine vehicles (one of which is bonus), and nine different environments.

The range of vehicles is large, each has its own different handling, and they are all wonderfully balanced. They go from power boats, to choppers and 4x4s, to sports cars. The stages are also varied, ranging from sandy beaches to pool tables and breakfast tables.

This *Racing* game was the beginning of the great franchise so it deserves respect for the standards it set all those years ago. This game is a credit to *Codemasters* and as they say in the *Micro Machines* intro "ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT!" – and they got it spot on.

Sports

Obvious Choices:

World Series Baseball, NBA Jam Tournament Edition, Joe Montana Football, Madden Football Series.

Mutant League Football



The [Mutant League](#) series actually fits quite well as [Sports](#) games for people that aren't into [Sports](#) games. Just like [NBA Jam](#) and its predecessors, [Mutant League Football](#) mixed up the standard *American Football* formula to make it more enjoyable for a gaming audience that wasn't looking for as much of a real football simulation in addition to mixing in some relatively violent, but goofy content (that caught some slack in the heat of the [Mortal Kombat](#) debate).

Another cool difference between real football and [Mutant League Football](#) is hazards around the football fields. Sometimes you'll come across mines. Actual land mines. Occasionally there are pits or fire pits. If you're on a playing field in outer space, run off the edge for a good laugh. Your little football players are sucked away off to their doom. It is always hilarious. Another field is made of a rubber like substance that has everyone bouncing around. The major draw of playing [Mutant League Football](#) is the various ways your players can die.

Tackle a guy or just bump him enough times and you'll make him explode into pieces. Blood flies out and you will see a little gore as well. Trolls, humans, skeletons, aliens, and even the robots are all wonderful to see die. Killing the ref is always awesome, but even more awesome is that you can pick a play that lets you bribe the ref.

The ref then calls penalties on the opposing players team for things like picking boogers. No seriously. Also hilarious are the things the players say in little cartoon boxes while a picture of them laughs. Usually occurs if a team is beating the other ones face in or if you've just killed another player.

Mutant League Hockey



The team at **EA** took a lot of gamer feedback from [Mutant League Football](#) to improve the formula and bring it to the world of **Hockey**. The result was a rock-solid effort and an entertaining alternative to standard 16-bit **Hockey** games.

[Mutant League Hockey](#) was no great leap forward for the series, but it did manage to tighten up a number of things on a technical level. For starters the graphics are a major step up from a game released a mere year before, looking much cleaner and leaving no doubt that a player is skeleton and not a robot or some such.

The controls are a bit tighter, though the entire game is of course played on ice so there's always some skid. The quotes from the players and coaches are also a lot funnier and more varied, vastly improving the mystique of lethal contact sports...

The presentation is what really makes this **Sports** game stand out above its *American Football* predecessor, which is arguably the entire point of a game where the living dead and mutants show off their take on contact sports.

[Mutant League Hockey](#) isn't worth repeated playthroughs unless it's against your friends, but realizing the loser of a fight gets more time in the penalty box than a guy who just got into a fight is one of those things that makes you realize you're not playing another **NHL Sports** game.

Super Baseball 2020



Even though [Super Baseball 2020](#) originated on the [Neo-Geo Arcade](#) and [Neo-Geo MVS](#) console, the [Genesis](#) port of this interesting baseball title is still worth a look. While some people might find weaknesses in it, you still can enjoy going back to it.

You probably loved regular *Baseball* games like [Sega's World Series Baseball](#), but [Super Baseball 2020](#) gave a fast-paced and fresh spin on the sport and combined it with a futuristic, sci-fi theme. Being able to upgrade both your human and robotic players with the money you earn along the way adds a lot of depth to this very affordable gem.

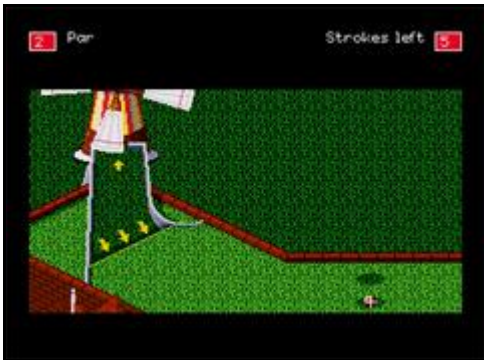
Unlike most [Sports](#) games that set themselves in the future, [Super Baseball 2020](#) still maintains what makes the sport enjoyable to play in backyards. The changes to the rules make sense, and haven't been switched or manipulated simply to make it different.

The same number of players enter the game, there are still three strikes, and blasting a shot out of the park is still a homerun... almost.

The major change, aside from the players, is the field of play. A homerun is only good for a run if it hits a specific spot in centerfield. Foul balls are only such if they pop behind the batter.

Everything else is fair game, off the glass-topped stands or not. the field will eventually be filled with mines, so it's imperative to watch your step.

Zany Golf



Zany Golf is an amazing mini *Golf* game that started on the **Apple II GS** and **PC DOS**, but was later ported to the **Genesis**. It was programmed mostly by the man behind **Marble Madness**, **Will Harvey**.

The gameplay is very similar to standard mini golf, but you must complete the course in a specific number of strokes. If you finish a hole within a specified time period or if you hit specific targets, you can earn bonus strokes.

Zany Golf featured a stunning 3D isometric viewpoint and was filled with nine inventive holes of mini golf. What made **Zany Golf**'s course so interesting is that each hole had a creative theme and features different obstacles that are not physically possible in real life such as jumping hamburgers, teleportation devices, and moving anthills.

Zany Golf had intuitive and precise controls, but still offered quite a challenge. Many **Sports** gamers will need to play a hole a few times through to be able to get through it without running out of strokes.

Coin-Op Arcade

Michael Jackson's Moonwalker



A lot of people are familiar with [Moonwalker](#) on the [Genesis](#), there was a [Coin-op Arcade](#) game released in 1990 by [Sega](#) as well. [Michael Jackson](#) will be saving kids throughout the game just like in the [Genesis](#) version. What's interesting is the isometric viewpoint, which is seldom seen in the genre and gives the game a different feel. Like the [Genesis](#) version, *Michael* can defeat enemies by getting them to perform in a dance number with him. That has to be the coolest thing about both games ([Coin-op Arcade](#) version and [Genesis](#) version). *Michael* can also turn into a robot and fire lasers and missiles at enemies if he finds Bubbles the chimp.

Arabian Fight



Not to be confused with [Arabian Magic](#) by [Taito](#). [Arabian Fight](#) is one of [Sega](#)'s lesser known games in 1992 and one of the few [Beat 'em Ups](#) featuring an *Arabian* theme. In terms of gameplay, [Arabian Fight](#) may be one of the weaker entries on this list. It's certainly playable, but a bit awkward at first.

The game has weird hit detection and can be rather confusing to play with more than one player onscreen. On gameplay alone, it's the visuals more than anything that you will take away from this **Coin-op Arcade** game. **Arabian Fight** pulls off some interesting visual tricks that are rather unconventional for a **Beat 'em Up**. Characters appear in the foreground of the screen before jumping onto the actual field of play. Your character will also jump into the foreground of the screen for a fully animated close up when performing magic attacks. It looks extremely cool. You can also throw enemies towards the screen. You'll loves to really put things right in your face as boss deaths are done with closeups and your character will be knocked forward into the screen when he or she runs out of lives. This is all done with animated graphics giving these moments a cartoon-like feel reminiscent. You'll also see characters get larger or smaller as they move towards or away from the screen. There are lot of things going on in this game's visual department.

Arabian Fight have sprite scaling, parallax effects, and animation all working together to give the game a somewhat 3D look. This was an ambitious effort from **Sega-AM2**. Suffice it to say, this **Coin-op Arcade** game has an unusual look to it that has to be seen to be really understood. **Arabian Fight** certainly has one of the most unique visual presentations you'll see in the genre. The gameplay is a bit awkward, but a skilled player can still blow through this on one life after adjusting to it. It's a ride worth taking for the sights alone and to take in the seldom used *Arabian* theme.

Spider-Man: The Video Game



This **Coin-op Arcade** game (which published by **Sega** in 1991) gets points just for making *Black Cat* playable. You can also use *Sub-Mariner*, *Hawkeye*, and the *Spider-Man* himself. This game features one of the oddest depictions of *Spider-Man* in video games. The way he moves around the screen doesn't seem very *Spidey*-like. It's still a fun **Beat 'em Up** for *Marvel's* comic book fans. One of its more notable features is the zoomed out levels. In these levels you'll rely on just web attacks and you will have to crawl on walls and ceilings.

Alien Storm



This **Coin-op Arcade** game doesn't seem quite as well known as other **Sega's Beat 'em Up** games, like **Streets of Rage** series, **Golden Axe** series, and **Altered Beast** on on the **Genesis**. **Alien Storm** is a bit of an unconventional **Beat 'em Up** by **Sega-AM1** in 1990. **Alien Storm** has a rather fast pace as your characters can move around the screen much faster than characters in other **Beat 'em Ups** do, plus you can dash too. Each character carries an interesting weapon.

One has a flame thrower and another one carries an electric whip. You have an energy bar that you can drain for some pretty amazing special attacks that will hit everything on the screen. One of these specials consists of dropping a nuclear missile and another one has you summoning an aircraft to bomb your enemies.

Alien Storm doesn't feature a ton of moves, but that's normal given the time when it came out. There is one cool little move where you vault over an enemy and watch your character aim her flamethrower down towards the enemy for a mid-air attack.

At the end of a **Beat 'em Up** section, the game will actually switch to a **First-Person Shooter** segment. The amount of stuff you can destroy in the environment while playing these sections is impressive. Also, there are levels where you're running at high speed and you have to avoid obstacles and blast enemies. The **Genesis** version is an excellent port, as it should be since **Sega** worked on it.